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BOOK REVIEWS

The Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles. Translated and explained by
J. T. SHEPPARD, M.A. Cambridge: University Press, 1920. 20s.

An edition of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* with introduction, translation, and notes might seem a superfluity after Jebb. But the greater classics are inexhaustively suggestive, and a new point of view is, perhaps, justified if it sends us back to the text to verify or refute. Mr. Sheppard's chief point is that for the right interpretation of a Greek play we need, even more than technical and linguistic erudition, a conscious apprehension of the ethical and religious presuppositions which the poet and his audience took for granted. To understand the *Oedipus* we must bear in mind enough of Greek poetical criticism of life to convince us that Sophocles could no more regard Oedipus as guilty than we do. Whatever the mythical or metaphysical background, the Oedipus of the play is an essentially noble man, the victim of circumstances—fate, the Lucretian *caeca potestas*, the something not ourselves that makes for our unhappiness. There is, then, no solution of the problem of evil. The lesson of the tragedy is simply the fundamental Greek virtue of *Sophrosyne*—modesty and moderation inculcated by this awful example of the frailty of our mortal state and the uncertainty of the morrow. We must walk humbly with God, know ourselves, keep measure, and pronounce no man happy before the end. It is the sheer beauty and serenity of Sophocles' art that transfigures these Greek commonplaces into an abiding religion of the imaginative reason or, as Renan says of Marcus Aurelius, "the religion that results from the simple fact of a moral consciousness face to face with the world"—facing the facts, as Mr. Sheppard puts it.

Mr. Sheppard therefore very sensibly refuses to say anything about medicine kings, vegetation spirits, and marriage with the earth-mother. He declines to discuss the unverifiable hypotheses of Robert and others on the origin and early history of the myth; and, though he examines them, he is a little impatient of the ingenious endeavors of philological literary critics to discover in Oedipus' character and speech the Aristotelian *ἀμαρτία* or moral flaw. He does not believe that the first chorus of the *Oedipus* represents a magic dance full of hoots and shouts to drive away pestilence, and he evidently prefers the radiant beauty of the representation of the Théâtre Français and Mounet-Sully's noble rendering of the rôle to the black cavern of mystery and the barbaric turbulence of the violent, ranting, screaming Reinhardt performance.

Sympathizing as I do with Mr. Sheppard's fundamental position, I hope that he will not misunderstand me if in a journal that is nothing if not critical I take exception to some of his applications. Unless criticism can hold us down to a sound interpretation of the texts, there is danger that all modern classical scholarship will become an idle play of unverified happy thoughts. Mr. Sheppard's introduction is evidently made up from lectures to students, and the great hazard of publishing lectures is that we are liable to neglect to test again the analogies, the parallels, and the quotations that will pass in the classroom.

The innocence of Oedipus depends mainly, he thinks, on the interpretation of the chorus *εἴ μοι ξυνείη* cited by Arnold as the supreme expression of the religion of the imaginative reason. It is not, as some have maintained, an irrelevant interlude like some of the choruses of Euripides and the *ἐμβόλημα* that Aristotle says began with Agathon. It does not express either Sophocles' or the audience's estimate of the character of Oedipus. It is an expression of the forebodings of the chorus at this stage of the action. Jebb's note on 863 hints at this view. Mr. Sheppard develops it with the fulness and ardor of an instructor who wishes to take his class with him. Taking the line *ὑβρις φυντεῖ τυράννον* as his text, he studies the entire Greek conception of the tyrant as worked up in recent German monographs, and is particularly insistent on the association of the idea of *κέρδος* with the tyrant in order to explain the line 889 *εἰ μὴ τὸ κέρδος κερδανεῖ δικαίως* without the necessity of taking it in direct personal application to Oedipus. This is perhaps overstraining and oversystematizing interpretation. The line 889 is a long way from 873, *τις* in 883 is "any man" and need not be specifically the tyrant. Once entered upon this topic of religious admonition, the chorus may be supposed to develop it broadly, and Mr. Sheppard's insistence that they shall follow out logically all the associations of *τύραννος* in Greek literature savors of that vigorous and rigorous philological method which he elsewhere deprecates. Without that we can easily grant to him the general relevance of the ode and concede that it takes its start dramatically from the chorus' forebodings about the character of Oedipus. That need not hinder us from taking it also with Arnold as an utterance of Sophocles' religion of the imaginative reason. A Greek chorus is often in undistinguishable proportions, the mouthpiece of the poet, the ideal spectator, and the man in the street.

However that may be, not all of the parallels collected by Mr. Sheppard in his zeal for his thesis will bear examination. To pass over his translation of the poem of Simonides in Plato *Protagoras* 346, it is not quite true that Homer says in *Odyssey* xviii. 136 that men's minds are good or bad according to the kind of weather Zeus allows them. Mr. Sheppard forgets the context. Nearly all the passages containing *δαίμων* are over-translated by "spirit," "curse," "fury," or the use of a capital letter. The blending in one sentence of three separate lines (Pindar *Isth.* v. 7. 11, 52): "It is the Goddess

Theia who gives the athlete his glory, though men's valor differs according to their *δαίμονες* . . . and Zeus himself who is master of all things gives us our good and evil," misrepresents the real connection of thought and the force of the particles in Pindar. "Nay every man hath set before him a plain road that leads to unswerving justice" in the fragment of Bacchylides, misleads the English reader by a metaphor not in the original *ἐν μέσῳ κείται*. In Eumenides 552 *ἐκὼν δ' ἀνάγκας ἄτερ δίκαιος ὦν* does not mean that he is "just so far as his free will can go, apart from some overmastering constraint," etc.; and it is not a parallel to the *ἐκὼν*, etc., of Simonides' poem. The thought of the entire context is that of Propertius v. 11. 47:

Mi natura dedit leges e sanguine ductas
Ne possem melior iudicis esse metu

and of the many proemia in Plato's laws that say in substance: "If the man obeys voluntarily, well—if not, the penalty is," etc. Similar exaggerations or misinterpretations mar the overinsistent elaboration of the true idea that the closing scenes of the *Oedipus* are calm, and that the final lesson is *σωφροσύνη*. Passages in which *σωφρονεῖν* simply means to be sober-minded or level-headed are invoked; the possible meaning "measure" rather than opportunity for *καιρὸς* is forced upon many passages of Pindar and the drama which it does not fit, and the undoubtedly possible connection of the two maxims "Measure is best" and "Call no man happy before the end" is read into many passages by the straining of synonyms and equivalents. Creon's "enough of tears" *ἄλς ἵν' ἐξήκεις δακρύων* is described as "Creon taking up the theme of moderation," which is as if a commentator on Shakespeare should take Hamlet's "something too much of this" for a repetition of the *μηδὲν ἄγαν* motive. The comparison of the close of Aeschylus' *Supplices* with the close of the *Oedipus* is quite fanciful, and the words *σὺ δὲ θέλῃς ἂν ἄθελκτον* are applied to the maidens instead of to Zeus. Particularly unfortunate is the attribution of serious error to Jebb on Bacchylides iii. 85 ff. which Mr. Sheppard translates: "Only the depths of the divine ether remain ever unpolluted, only the waters of the ocean are always pure. Gold is indeed a delight, but," etc. There is no equivalent of "only" in the Greek and none of "indeed." Mr. Sheppard comments: "That is the moral. Gold is corruptible. In nature only the bright ether and the purifying waters of eternal seas, and in man only virtue and the praise of virtue are beyond the power of change." But it is Pindaric commonplace that gold is not corruptible (see fr. 222, *Διὸς παῖς ὁ χρυσὸς κ.τ.λ.*), and the moral to which Bacchylides is leading up is not "piety and remembrance of our littleness" but the immortality of song.

Mr. Sheppard's text in the main follows Jebb. In 63 he reads *μ' εὐδοντά*; in 101, *λύοντας, ὡς τόδ'—αἶμα—χευμάζον πόλιν*; in 230, *ἦ ἐξ ἄλλης χθονὸς*; in 464, *εἶδε πέτρα*; in 478, *πετραῖος*; in 625, *ὅταν προδείξῃς οἶόν ἐστι τὸ φθονεῖν*; in 876, his own emendation *ἀκρότατά τις δ' ἀναβὰς*.

The translation is admirable. The diction is entirely free from crudity and translator's idiom. The blank verse reads easily, and is adapted with great skill to the varying dramatic and emotional tone and to the characters of the speakers. The unrhymed measures of the choruses, while not attempting an impossible reproduction of the original, follow its movement and preserve its cadences and its emphasis sufficiently to give the English reader a correct impression of the ῥθος, and not to irritate the reader who knows the Greek. The whole can be read with positive pleasure even by a blasé reviewer.

The notes seem to take much of the detail given by Jebb for granted. They are in large part justification of the translation and confirmation of the doctrines of the introduction. No important problems of interpretation are altogether overlooked. But the chief interest lies in the delicate and detailed study of the psychology and the dramatic significance of the dialogue from speech to speech and line to line. In some cases, which there is no space to discuss, this leads to overrefining on what I think could be shown to be normal Greek usage. But be that as it may, no one, however familiar with the play and previous editions, can study these notes without gaining a heightened perception of the beauty and subtlety of Sophocles' art.

PAUL SHOREY

Etymologicum Gudianum, Fasc. 1 and 2 (A to Ζεαί), ed. A. DE STEFANI. Leipsic: Teubner, 1909-20.

Two parts of this new edition of the *Etymologicum Gudianum* (the first edition of which was edited by Sturz in 1818) have so far appeared. The lexicon obtained its name from the Dane, Marquard Gude, who formerly owned the MS (now in Wolfenbüttel) upon which Sturz based his text. De Stefani's edition shows a marked improvement upon that of Sturz, for the new editor has based his text upon the Codex Barberinus, which is not only a superior MS to that owned by Gude, but also denotes the indebtedness of the *Etymologicum Gudianum* to the etymological lexicons prepared by Photius.

The history of the *Gudianum* and other ancient lexicons has been exhaustively treated by Reitzenstein,¹ to whose investigations and private assistance De Stefani pays an ample tribute. Three etymological works are closely associated with the name of Photius; and three others are strongly influenced by one or more of the Photian group:

The Lexicon of Photius (Λέξεων συναγωγή): A MS of this work is now in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge, and was edited in 1822 from Porson's transcript by Dobree. The MS is of the tenth century. Portions of the beginning of the lexicon, which are missing in the MS, have also been edited by Reitzenstein and by Fredrich and Wentzel from existing fragments.²

¹ In Griech, *Etymologika*, and in Pauly-Wissowa, s.v. *Etymologika*.

² See Reitz. *Photius' Lexikon*, p. ix.